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INDIA.

The bubonic plague bacillus in grain and flour.

BOMBAY, April 7, 1897.

SIR: I have the honor to inclose herewith a copy of a letter on the occurrence of the bubonic plague microbe in grain and flour, from Prof. E. H. Hankin, chemical examiner and bacteriologist Northwest Provinces and Oudh, to the secretary of the Bombay chamber of commerce, dated February 19, 1897. * * *

I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

S. COMFORT,
United States Consul.

Hon. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE.

[Inclosure.]

HEALTH OFFICE LABORATORY,
Bombay, 19th February, 1897.

SIR: In reply to your inquiry as to whether I have ever found the bubonic plague microbe in grain and flour, I beg to state that, although I have examined a large number of specimens under different conditions, I have never succeeded in detecting it. My observations have been carried out on both clean and dirty grain, sweepings of granaries, under infected dwellings, grain mixed with rats' dejecta taken from near the body of a dead rat, grain that had been carried by rats through a hole in the wall of a granary and stored in a latrine, but in all cases a negative result has been obtained. I have also examined weevils and other insects parasitic on stored grain without detecting the microbe. I have recently examined flour from a small godown in the fort in which rats had been dying of the plague with a negative result.

2. It is my opinion that the only connection of grain with the plague in Bombay is that, at the beginning of the outbreak, large numbers of rats were affected, and that these animals were especially common in the neighborhood of granaries.

I have, etc.,

E. H. HANKIN, M. A.,

Chemical Examiner and Bacteriologist N. W. Provinces and Oudh.

To the SECRETARY TO THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, Bombay.

JAPAN.

Smallpox declines—Plague increases.

YOKOHAMA, April 23, 1897.

SIR: I have the honor to forward herewith my regular report on infectious diseases in Japan for period April 1 to April 22, inclusive. In so doing, I beg to call your attention to the sharp and fatal outbreak of plague in Tainan, Formosa, since the 1st of the present month, as well as to the decided decline of the smallpox epidemic as regards the country at large. This decline is particularly apparent in Kobe, Yokohama, and Tokyo, the places of greatest importance to us, as supplying the larger proportion of steerage travel.

The occurrence of smallpox in Yokohama and its suburbs, April 1 to April 22, has been as follows: April 1, no case, 1 death; April 2, no case, no death; April 3, 2 cases, no death; April 4, 2 cases, 1 death; April 5, 3 cases, no death; April 6, 1 case, 1 death; April 7, 3 cases, no death; April 8, no case, no death; April 9, no case, 1 death; April 10, no case, no death; April 11, 2 cases, no death; April 12, 1 case, no death; April 13, 3 cases, 1 death; April 14, no case, no death; April 15, 1 case, no death; April 16, no case, no death; April 17, no case, no